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The Binding of Isaac (video game)

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The Binding of Isaac is an independent video game designed by Edmund McMillen and Florian Himsl. It was released on Steam on September 28, 2011. Players control a crying naked child named Isaac or one of six other unlockable characters. After his mother receives a message from God demanding the life of her son as proof of her faith, Isaac flees into the monster-filled basement of their home.

On November 1, 2011, it was added to the Humble Indie Bundle as part of the Humble Voxatron Debut.[1] The game and downloadable content was later featured in the Humble Indie Bundle 7.[2] Additionally, the game and downloadable content was made available on the Humble Roguelike Weekly Bundle in January 2014.[3] Console versions, featuring additional features that the developer could not implement in the original Flash version, are currently being developed by McMillen.[4]

The game's title and plot are composed of references to the Biblical story known as the Binding of Isaac. According to McMillen, the game touches on dark, adult themes including child abuse, gender identity, infanticide, neglect, suicide, abortion, and how religion might negatively affect a child; all concepts which video games generally avoid.[5]

The Binding of Isaac

Publisher(s)	Headup Games
Designer(s)	Edmund McMillen Florian Himsl
Composer(s)	Danny Baranowsky
Platform(s)	Microsoft Windows OS X Linux
Release date(s)	September 28, 2011
Genre(s)	Action-adventure, dungeon crawl, roguelike
Mode(s)	Single-player
Distribution	1× CD-ROM, download (Via Steam)

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Gameplay [edit]

The Binding of Isaac screenshot showing Isaac attacking (center) and two enemies (top left and top right).

The Binding of Isaac is a top-down 2D roguelike game in which the player controls Isaac or one of six other unlockable characters as he explores the dungeons located in Isaac's room's basement. The game's mechanics and presentation is similar to the dungeons of *The Legend of Zelda*, while incorporating random, procedurally-generated levels.[6] On each floor of the basement dungeon, the player must fight monsters in a room before he can continue onto the next room. Along the way, the player can collect money to buy equipment from shopkeepers, keys to unlock special treasure rooms, and new weapons and power-ups to strengthen their chances against the enemies. Each floor of the dungeon includes a boss which the player must defeat before continuing to the next level. On the 6th floor, the boss fight is your mother and you have to defeat her stomping foot, shooting eyes, spawned enemies and splaying hands. Once you have defeated her, you cannot leave the room unless you have a teleportation. Going down the next level, you will take one full heart of damage for every hit. On the 8th floor, you have to fight your mothers heart, which also spawns enemies and shoots bombs. Then you will have the option of going to fight Satan, or to fight Isaac, a boss that is stationary and shoots at you when you shoot at it, and Blue Baby which is almost exactly like the Isaac boss fight, except it fires more frequently.[*citation needed*]

Plot [edit]

The Binding of Isaac's plot is inspired by the biblical story of the same name.[7] Isaac, a child, and his mother live in a small house on a hill, both happily keeping to themselves, with Isaac drawing pictures and playing with his toys, and his mother watching Christian broadcasts on television. Isaac's mother then hears "a voice from above", stating her son is corrupted with sin, and needs to be saved. It asks her to remove all that was evil from Isaac, in an attempt to save him. His mother obliges, taking away his toys, pictures, game console and even his clothes and some scenes point to circumcision.

The voice once again speaks to Isaac's mother, stating he must be cut off from all that is evil in the world. Once again, his mother obliges, and locks Isaac inside his room. Once more, the voice speaks to Isaac's mother. It states she has done well, but it still questions her devotion, and requests she sacrifice her son. She obliges, grabbing a butcher's knife from the kitchen and walking to Isaac's room. Isaac, watching through a sizable crack in his door, starts to panic. He finds a trapdoor hidden under his rug and jumps in, just before his mother opens his bedroom door. Isaac then puts the paper he was drawing onto his wall, which becomes the title screen.

During the game's loading points, Isaac is shown curled up in a ball, crying. His thoughts are visible, ranging among rejection from his mother and humiliation from his peers to a scenario involving his own death. The game features at least 13 endings.

The Binding of Isaac: Wrath of the Lamb [edit]

"Wrath of the Lamb" redirects here. For the religious apocalypse, see Book of Revelation.

An expansion to the game, entitled *Wrath of the Lamb*, was released through Steam on May 28, 2012.[8] The expansion adds 70% more content to the original, and contains more than 10 bosses, over 100 items, over 40 unlocks, two additional endings, and two additional optional levels.[9] This expansion added new "alternate" floors, which can replace the normal Basement, Caves, Depths and Womb to Cellar, Catacombs, Necropolis, and the Utero. These floors contain harder enemies, and a different set of bosses. Other features include a new item type, Trinkets, which have a variety of passive or triggered effects when carried, as well as new room types and the addition of a "Super Secret Room" to each randomly generated floor.[*citation needed*]

The Binding of Isaac: Rebirth [edit]

Main article: The Binding of Isaac: Rebirth

Cancelled Nintendo 3DS port [edit]

The developers had tweeted that the game would receive a port to the Nintendo 3DS via the Nintendo eShop and were waiting for approval from Nintendo. Nintendo later rejected the game because of "questionable religious content".[10][11]

This decision brought the game's developer Edmund McMillen to praise the Steam platform and the freedom it gave to the publishers regardless of the game content (compared to Nintendo), and several gaming websites were outraged at Nintendo's decision.[11]

Reception [edit]

The Binding of Isaac received generally favorable reviews from game critics. On the review aggregator GameRankings, the game has an average score of 84.89%, based on 19 reviews.[12] On Metacritic, the game has an average of 84 out of 100 based on 30 reviews.[13]

In Germany the game has received an age 16+ rating because of potentially blasphemous content.[18]

As of April 2013 the game has sold over two million copies.[19]

The Binding of Isaac

Aggregate scores	
Aggregator	**Score**
GameRankings	84.89%[12]
Metacritic	84/100[13]
Review scores	
Publication	**Score**
Eurogamer	9/10[14]
Game Informer	8/10[15]
GameSpy	★★★★★[16]
IGN	7.5/10[17]

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5. ^ McMillen, Edmund (November 28, 2012). "Postmortem: McMillen and Himsl's *The Binding of Isaac*" . Retrieved February 17, 2014.
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7. ^ "Youtube video of the trailer" . December 2011.
8. ^ Fletcher, JC (7 May 2012). "The Binding of Isaac's Wrath of the Lamb begins May 28" . Joystiq. Retrieved 7 May 2012.
9. ^ Marchiafava, Jeff (7 May 2012). "The Binding of Isaac Expansion Dated" . Game Informer. Retrieved 7 May 2012.
10. ^ Kollar, Phil (2012-02-29). "Binding Of Isaac Blocked From 3DS Due To "Questionable Religious Content" " . Game Informer. Retrieved 2012-03-01. "*In a follow-up tweet, McMillen confirmed that the decision was "due to the games [sic] 'questionable religious content.' He then took the opportunity to praise Steam for being such an open and supporting platform for independent and digitally distributed games.*"
11. ^ a b "Nintendo won't allow Binding of Isaac on the 3DS eShop" . Destructoid. 2012-02-29. Retrieved 2012-02-29. "It's a disgusting and sad situation, and I can only hope that something is done soon to change the way both Nintendo, and the industry in general, views the role between the hardware developers and software artists.(...)*"All this stuff has opened my eyes so much more to the freedom devs have with Steam. Censorship like this doesn't pop up that often in games, and there really are only a handful of "banned video games" or highly censored ones. It's nice to have the freedom to publish something that speaks its mind about religion on a platform like Steam.*""
12. ^ a b "The Binding of Isaac for PC - GameRankings" . *GameRankings*. CBS Interactive. Retrieved 6 January 2013.
13. ^ a b "The Binding of Isaac for PC Metacritic Score" . *Metacritic*. CBS Interactive. Retrieved 3 November 2011.
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External links [edit]

- *The Binding of Isaac* on Steam
- *The Binding of Isaac* demo on Newgrounds

v · t · e ·	**Video games designed by Edmund McMillen**
	Gish · *Aether* · *Spewer* · *Super Meat Boy* · ***The Binding of Isaac*** (*Rebirth*) · *The Basement Collection* ·

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